

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Lieutenant General Ben Lear addresses the officers and noncommissioned officers of the 10th Cavalry at Camp Funston. Officers standing left to right are Brigadier General Terry Allen, Lieutenant General Ben Lear, and Brigadier General B. O. Davis.

Mr. Hollowell: When did you leave for the maneuver?

Sergeant Brown: We left there in '41.

Mr. Hollowell: '41. But it was after the maneuver that they started to. . . .

Captain Knapp: These are the maneuvers down in Louisiana and. . . .

Sergeant Brown: Louisiana and Texas and all that. After they came back, they started breaking up one thing and another. [Of] course, that's when I got pissed off at the Army anyway. They wanted to send me to Camp Polk, Louisiana. Well, down South then was kinda hard, see. 'Cause a buddy of mine, he went down there and got into the MPs. They hadn't gotten things broken down the way they do now, so they had MP duties, but the white MP could carry a gun and they gave the colored MP, he had to carry a stick. So, he wrote and told me about it, and so, they were going to send me down there and I told them, "I ain't going."

[General laughter]

Sergeant Robinson: A stick is not competition against a gun, is it?

Sergeant Brown: If I'm an MP and I can't carry a gun, then I ain't going.

Captain Knapp: Were there a lot of differences between what white soldiers could do and what black soldiers could do back then?

Sergeant Brown: Yes. Yes, when they first started out. When they first started breaking up, then you didn't . . . you couldn't arrest white soldiers down there in Louisiana.

Captain Knapp: Well, here at Fort Leavenworth, there were white troop units at the same time you all were here, weren't there?

Sergeant Brown: Let's see, there were mostly quartermaster and MPs. The guard company was practically all white.

Sergeant Robinson: The 17th Infantry also was here.

Sergeant Brown: [The] 17th Infantry, that was all white. We didn't come too much in contact with them no way.

Sergeant Robinson: No, no.

Captain Knapp: They didn't do any of this school support or. . .

Mr. Hollowell: Yes, yes, they did.

Captain Knapp: Did they do some of that?

Sergeant Robinson: But they didn't do any of the type of work that we were doing. They weren't servants. They [weren't] strikers or nothing like that, working or doing stable work or nothing of that kind. I guess they were more or less in administrative work, wasn't it?

Mr. Hollowell: I can't qualify that, but they were primarily in support of the Command and General Staff College [School] activities and training.

Captain Knapp: Helping out with exercises and maneuvers, small kinds of maneuvers and war games and training exercises that the students here in the school would do, plus their own training?

Mr. Hollowell: Right.

Mr. Brown: Well Rob, I heard you and Hollowell mention one thing that you made a mistake on.

Sergeant Robinson: What's that?

Mr. Brown: You said, "C Company." C Troop. A cavalryman does not like for you to call a troop a company.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right; it was not a company.

Captain Knapp: Well, I'm an infantryman. I'm not going to argue with you.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right, there's no C Company in the cavalry at that time, especially the old horse cavalry.

Mr. Brown: When they used to meet one another and they didn't know you, they call you "trooper." And if you was a trooper, a white cavalry[man] and black [cavalryman] would fight for each other.

Captain Knapp: Troopers would.

Mr. Brown: Yes, they'd stick together. They don't let nobody run over a trooper.

Captain Knapp: In fact, there was a parade. Wasn't there a parade out at Manhattan, Kansas, and the units were organized for the parade . . . this is during the 1940—41 time when you're out at Camp Funston. One of the black cavalry units was the lead in the parade? Because its lineage was. . .

Mr. Brown: Yes, they led right here in Leavenworth when they had parades. We led the parade. We always led the parade. Wasn't no other outfit here ranked above us as far as the cavalry.

Captain Knapp: Lineagewise.

Mr. Brown: Yes, the cavalry is . . . well, I think the engineers come ahead of the cavalry, but there wasn't no engineers here. So, that put the 10th Cavalry in front.

Captain Knapp: The regimental motto, Ready and Forward, was that part of your everyday greeting when you'd see an officer and have to salute, did you say that?

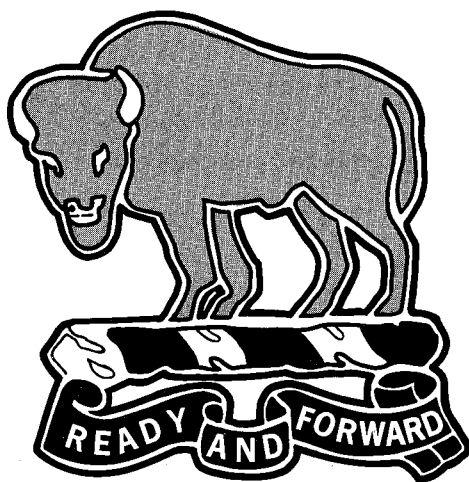
Mr. Hollowell: No, no, that's just on the inscription. The buffalo around the edge of the. . .

Captain Knapp: Today, particularly in a lot of line units which have mottos, whenever a soldier passes an officer and salutes he'll say . . . he'll call out whatever the motto is.

Sergeant Robinson: No, we didn't have to do that.

Captain Knapp: Mr. Hollowell, you were quite an athlete here at Fort Leavenworth, and I know you have got a special philosophy about athletics and the way athletics help men prepare for life. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that?

Mr. Hollowell: I always like sports from high school until such time as I got into the service. Having played football, track,



Distinctive insignia of the 10th Cavalry

and basketball, those were the three major events. Sports always stimulates esprit de corps within the regiment. A regiment that plays well, fights well, works well. That's the way I tick and the way that perhaps any regiment that had a good football team or could win . . . the 9th and 10th Cavalry, when they came together, that was one of the most important events of the whole year, with the 9th Cavalry and 10th Cavalry playing football here on old Gruber Field.

Captain Willey . . . when I first came in, Captain Barnes—what's Barnes' first name?

Sergeant Robinson: Wallace.

Mr. Hollowell: Wallace Barnes was the coach of the team. A fellow by the name of "Hamfat" Jenkins was his assistant.

Captain Knapp: Hamfat Jenkins!

Sergeant Robinson: That was his nickname.

Mr. Hollowell: His name was Cleveland Jenkins, but his nickname was Hamfat because he was a chubby, big, fat fellow.

Sergeant Robinson: He was in charge of the horseshoeing department; he was a horseshoer.

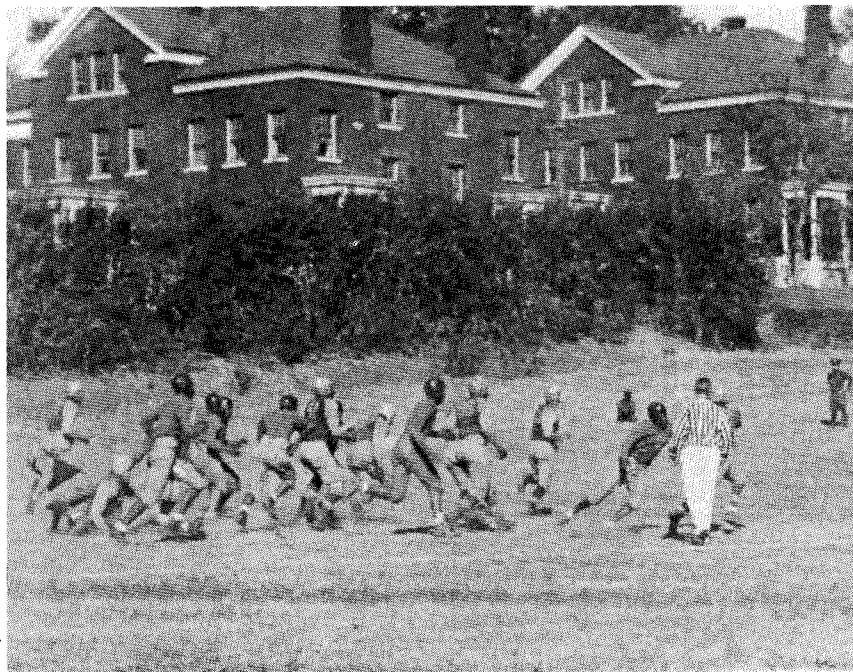
Mr. Hollowell: That was his duty. Another fellow who played on the football team was named Fitzgerald—big fellow.

Sergeant Robinson: Also was a horseshoer.



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First Sergeant Cleveland ("Hamfat") Jenkins



10th Cavalry football team playing on Gruber Field

Mr. Hollowell: Both were horseshoers.

Sergeant Robinson: Much of a man, had hands like elephant hands.

Mr. Hollowell: Fitzgerald played on the football team. I think he played guard.

A young fellow who lives in town now—his name is Young [his father was a 10th cavalryman]—played end on the football team. Skip Young they used to call him.

Another fellow who lives in town, at least the son of the fellow who played . . . name is Oliver. Oliver, I think, was a GS-12 or 13 up here in Bell Hall. Well, he just retired, but he was a computer specialist. His dad was in the 10th Cavalry.

At any rate, my main thinking is a team that plays well, fights well. Its main function is to stimulate pride within the regiment, and it establishes a type of esprit de corps which is good for the units just like the World Series is to the nation. The competition between regiments and agencies is good for the people. It's a morale builder. That's sorta the way I . . . I like sports.

Captain Knapp: I've seen a poster, an old poster, that's got a picture of you. "Hollowell leads 10th Cav to another victory," something like that.

Mr. Hollowell: Right. That's true.

Captain Knapp: Let's talk a little bit about family life here at Fort Leavenworth. Now, none of you were married while you were at Fort Leavenworth, but all of you, I think—I don't know about you Sergeant Brown—but I know you [Sergeant Robinson] married a local girl and, Mr. Hollowell, did your wife come from the Leavenworth area?

Mr. Hollowell: She taught school here in the Leavenworth public school system for twelve years prior to our getting married.

Captain Knapp: Were many of the soldiers in the 10th Cavalry married when you were here? Where did they live? How were their families kept and all that?

Sergeant Brown: A lot of them lived in town.

Mr. Hollowell: Most of them.

Sergeant Brown: Right over the hill here, they got this housing area where they had a kinda . . . what do you call them [the group joins in with "cantonment area"]. A lot of them stayed over there.

Captain Knapp: Where one of the enlisted housing areas is now at Fort Leavenworth.

Sergeant Brown: Yes, over there by that school.

Captain Knapp: Over by . . . OK, down by Patton Junior High School.

Sergeant Brown: A lot of them lived there, and a lot of them lived in town. Those that weren't married, like Rob here and Brown, me, we had shacks in town since we weren't married.

[Laughter]

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, the old "shack-pappy trail."

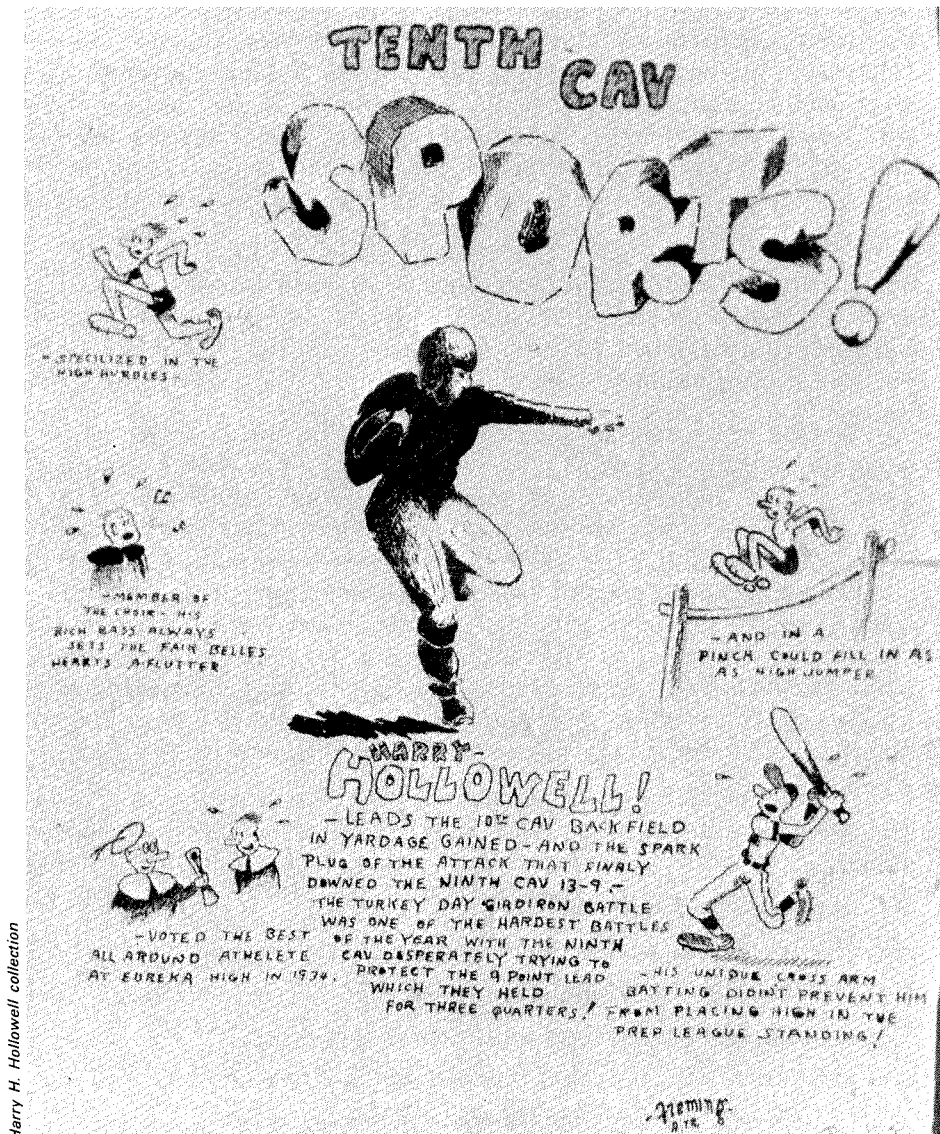
[More laughter from the group]

Yes, that's what it was. I was telling Harry that winter's coming on. This here sewage coverage that runs across the street coming to the fort, you know, going round by Bluntville, that thing, I could walk that thing at night.

Captain Knapp: With your eyes closed.

Sergeant Robinson: I don't know about with my eyes closed, captain. I ain't going to say that, but I had walked it so much that [it] was called "shack-pappy's trail."

Captain Knapp: Mr. Brown was telling me about that as we were coming in. He says that you all would use that sometimes when you wanted to slip off without getting caught.



Mr. Brown: Yeah, if you go out the front way, the main thing . . . well, the captain or anybody could pass you there and you better have your tie on and all that. Who wants to have a tie on, as hot as it was, with that blouse on. . . .

Sergeant Robinson: Oh yes, I see what he's talking about.

Mr. Brown: With that Sam Browne belt around your waist, and there you sweating up a breeze and walking to town.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, well, you see, going through the "shack-pappy trail," you could relax, undo your tie, unbutton your blouse and put your blouse on your shoulder because it was an all-wooded area through there, see. But about the time you got to Metropolitan, you had to put that back on again, when you're in town. I see what you're speaking about.

Mr. Brown: I'd sneak in down below.

Mr. Hollowell: On the other hand, right here where Bell Hall is was what they called Arsenal Hill. There may have been perhaps a half-dozen sets of quarters in which some of the higher-ranking enlisted men lived right here.

My first sergeant, Chappie Brown, lived in one of those little concrete buildings just as you come in, let's see, the hospital. There is the hospital and coming north, where that insurance agency is, you come around that back gate and come around that . . . the commissary used to be down in that south[west] end. But you come around that . . . you continue north and, of course, you're going to run into the back area of the . . . come around the little curve and make that left turn, I don't know what that's called but there's two little sets of quarters there. That's where my first sergeant lived. [Mr. Hollowell is talking about the quarters at the corner of Biddle Boulevard and Organ Avenue.]

Mr. Brown: You know what that used to be before it was quarters?

Mr. Hollowell: What was it?

Mr. Brown: That was a milking barn.

Mr. Hollowell: Yeah, something like that.

Captain Knapp: They had cattle over there?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, they had cattle over in the pastures.

Captain Knapp: About where the old bakery was?

Mr. Brown: That's right. The bakery was over there, and the

cattle came up under the hill there and came to that milking barn, and they'd milk them and send them on back down there. Now, that's been a long time ago, 'cause I wasn't nothing but a real small kid.

Captain Knapp: The area we are talking about is the area over by where the new hospital is and where the communications center is.

Mr. Hollowell: Oh, I see. We're coming farther north. When you come to the end of. . .

Captain Knapp: Organ Avenue and that area there.

Mr. Hollowell: Yeah, you go farther north, if you pass the back of the hospital, then you're going to run into the . . . you've got to . . . that runs out, you see. Where that road runs out, then you make the left turn and that next time you can go north . . . those little sets of quarters right there was where Brown lived.

Also, at the end of McClellan Street, going north, there used to be three or four sets of quarters on the right-hand side of the road there, I think. Evans lived up there at one time. A fellow by the name of Baker lived up there. [George] Barnes used to live up there.

Sergeant Robinson: That's just right north of the old hospital.

Mr. Hollowell: No, no, I'm speaking about, you know where the engineer, uh. . .

Sergeant Brown: Right north of where the fire station is.

Mr. Hollowell: Yes.

Sergeant Robinson: Oh yes, I see [several talking at once], they had Number 7 Stable right up on the. . .

Captain Knapp: The veterinary clinic is in there now.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, that's right.

Captain Knapp: Family housing is down that way; the Engineer Snack Bar is that way [all agree].

Mr. Hollowell: Then, as you make the left turn at the end of McClellan, there was a big . . . what they called a mule skinner's barn. That's where the band was located, on that knoll over there when I was. . .

Captain Knapp: Where was that exactly?

Mr. Hollowell: When you get to the end of McClellan Street, make the left turn, you start to go down the hill.

Captain Knapp: Sure, past the old MP Station . . . go ahead, tell us.

Mr. Hollowell: When you get to the end of that road, McClellan, that big building, I don't know what it is there now, but just over to the right there, on that knoll was the, what they called the mule skinner's barn where the band used to be located. You understand where I'm talking about?

Captain Knapp: I think so, sure.

Mr. Hollowell: Let's see. Once you get down to the bottom of the hill, then over to the left side is where the . . . uh, the . . . I can't think . . . the rec, rec . . . where they fix cars there. What do you call it? [Recreational Services Auto Craft Shop]

Sergeant Brown: The motor pool?

Mr. Hollowell: Yes, the motor pool. Down in the motor pool, you see, down below but before you get to where you make the turn down there, on this knoll I'm talking about is where this band quarters used to be.

Captain Knapp: You all talked earlier about the . . . very briefly about your service club that's now located, well, that was located where Gruber football field is now. Aside from that service club, what other things were available to the black soldiers, black troopers for recreation on post.

Sergeant Robinson: Well, they had the bowling alley. Didn't they come up with the bowling alley?

Mr. Hollowell: That was later on; that was after '36.

Sergeant Brown: That was after we broke up; that was after '40.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right. They had that before the 10th Cavalry left here, didn't they?

Sergeant Brown: They just was fixing it.

Sergeant Robinson: Just had fixed it.

Captain Knapp: Was that the bowling alley that was inside the polo stable or in Gruber riding hall?

Mr. Hollowell: That was inside the polo stable.

[What followed was a lengthy discussion of just exactly which building was the polo stable and which was Stable Number 1. At the end, Sergeant Brown and Mr. Brown agreed that Mr. Hollowell and Sergeant Robinson were wrong. We never really decided where the bowling alley was. Post records show that

there was a small bowling alley in Building 315, now called Flint Hall.]

Captain Knapp: Fellows, I don't think we're going to solve this. Aside from the service club and playing sports, those who did, were there any other recreational things that you could do on post? How about the movies?

Sergeant Brown: You could go to the movies.

[The rest agreed.]

Captain Knapp: And I'm sure the dances and things at the service club.

Mr. Brown: That's where I done my thing. I'd get on that floor.

Captain Knapp: You were a dancer?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Mr. Hollowell: You mean in the old 10th Cavalry Club?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, in the old 10th Cavalry. I done my thing on the floor. That's the reason why my wife gets after me today.

Sergeant Brown: You're out there trying to dance.

Captain Knapp: What? Do you try to get her out there on the floor . . . ?

Sergeant Robinson: You can't do your thing. . . .

Mr. Brown: I tell her, "Come on, let's dance." She says, "I will have to raise you up in the morning 'cause you won't be able to get up."

Captain Knapp: Well, this has been great. I'd like to bring us to a point now where I'd like to ask you general questions and let each one of you respond for a couple of minutes. What do you think are the main contributions of the soldiers of the 10th Cavalry, black soldiers in general, during the time that you served in the Army? What is the legacy during the time you served? Let's start with you, Sergeant Brown.

Sergeant Brown: Well, the only thing I can say is we did just what we was told to do. I mean, we did what we was supposed to do, and there wasn't much soldiering to be done is the only thing I can say—at first. After we left here and went . . . I enjoyed doing what duties we did have to do preparing the younger men for what they had to come through in World War II.

Captain Knapp: How about you, Mr. Brown?

Mr. Brown: I think it was kinda slow going, but the war shook all that up, and that's what brought them to the ranks and everything. But see, I made a mistake. I was looking too far ahead too fast, and that's when I got out. Mr. Williams and Mr. Hunnicutt [Sergeant Hunnicutt] tried to get me to stay, and he said, "Something's going to break pretty soon, Brownie, something's going to break." I said, "Yeah, my back." They laughed. He said, "No, no. Just stay in a little bit longer." Well, I didn't see that, but they saw it cause they said something was going to break pretty soon. I got out in '39, the winter of '39 and '40 is when they commenced to bringing them all in there.

Captain Knapp: Sergeant Robinson?

Sergeant Robinson: I feel that the contribution that we made as black soldiers made it possible for some of the people to be in the position that they are today because we took so many of the hard knocks. We withstood the embarrassments and everything. It's like I have told many of them that we had more . . . what is that we had in the PX?

Mr. Brown: We had more money and everything in there.

Sergeant Robinson: No, no, I'm talking about what the companies had . . . well, the 10th Cavalry had more of it in the PX than anybody on the post. What am I trying to say? They took it and bought furniture with it and all like that. What am I trying to say?

Mr. Hollowell: You mean "fund" [Unit Fund]?

Sergeant Robinson: Funds, yes. But at that time, I told lots of these people today that's wearing bars on their shoulders that, at one time, in this very . . . where the PX is stationed up there in the big building where the library is now . . . that we, as black men couldn't go in there and eat an ice cream cone, see.

Of course, I don't hold that as a thing for them to go by because that was, as I explained to you about it, as being the law of the land. I'm just saying those are some of the things that we had to contend with. We wanted a package of cigarettes. We'd go in there and buy them, but we couldn't smoke it in there. Mr. Hollowell and myself have been sitting in the choir—we both sing in the choir at church—on military day, we look out and see these colonels and these black young ladies, captains and majors, and so forth, and it makes you feel so good on the inside that we made it—broke the ice—made it possible for them to be in that position. They are reaping the

benefits of the hard knocks that we made the sacrifices for . . . that we went through. That's what makes me feel good about.

Captain Knapp: I think you all reap some of the benefits too. At least, I hope you do. Mr. Hollowell, why don't you wrap it up for us.

Mr. Hollowell: I think the mission of all soldiers is that of being prepared for war in time of peace. The contributions that were made by the soldiers, they happened to be black in this particular situation, I think the contribution that [we] made was just the same as that made by any other troops. We had to withstand many disadvantages as a result of the prejudice, or discrimination, but I think the conscience of the people is such that a number of those things have been changed to the satisfaction of all concerned in the memories of the majority as well as the minority.

The success of our nation is dependent upon the contributions of everybody doing his best to make our nation great. The measuring stick should be that of people, not necessarily people of color, but all peoples making their contribution regardless of who they are, where they are. They make a contribution as an American rather than necessarily as a black man.

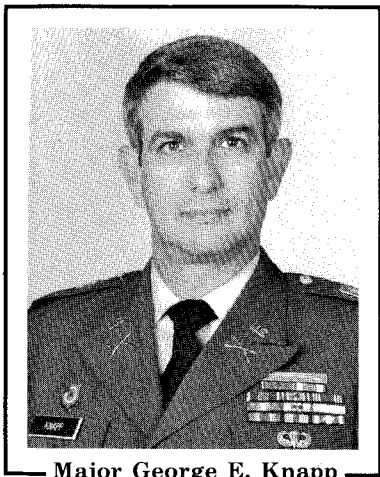
I'm thinking particularly in the case of the one assignment as of this day. I feel that the president of the United States, the current president, the vice president, and those people made their selection of the current joint chief . . . what do you call it?

Captain Knapp: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs [General Colin L. Powell]. . . .

Mr. Hollowell: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think they had reasons for selecting him to do that job because they thought he could do it. But I don't think they had in the back of their mind that this is a black man necessarily. I'm hoping that they made the choice based on the effect that he is an American who happens to be black. I hope that as we move forward today that that be the barometer, the catalyst, the main objective of the administration of our government and administrators of our Army . . . that they include all of their subjects exploiting their talents to the greatest degree based on the fact that they are Americans who happened to be black and that the nation goes forward and we all live happily ever after.

Captain Knapp: Thank you, Mr. Hollowell, and thank all of you for being with us today.

I hope you have found this session with these veteran soldiers informative. I hope you found it interesting, and I hope that it's given you a new perspective on the contributions of soldiers to this country several years ago and even up through current times. Thanks very much for being with us today.



Major George E. Knapp

Major George E. Knapp is a history instructor at the Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a graduate of Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama; has an M.A. in history from the University of Missouri at Kansas City; and is a USACGSC graduate. He served in Vietnam as an enlisted man and received his commission in the Infantry from Officer Candidate School in 1978. He commanded infantry companies in the 2d Armored Division (Forward). Other assignments at Fort Leavenworth include service at the TRADOC Analysis Command and the School of Advanced Military Studies.

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